

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for matching users by affinity and geographic location comprising:
a portable communications terminal associated with a first user;
a computing facility connected by a telecommunications link to said portable communications terminal;
a location service capable of providing location information regarding said portable communications terminal to said central computing facility,
means for storing information regarding affinity preferences of said first user,
means for determining a match based upon a degree of affinity correlation between said first user and second user, wherein a minimum degree of affinity correlation constituting a match varies depending on the proximity of said first and second users; and
means for generating an alert message when a match is determined by said means for determining;
means for sending said alert message to said portable communications terminal.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein said means for storing stores information regarding affinity preferences of a plurality of users.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein said means for storing is located in said computing facility.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein said portable terminal comprises a wireless telephone.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein said portable terminal comprises a portable data terminal.
6. The system of claim 1 further comprising means for establishing a communications path between said portable communications terminal associated with said first user and a portable communications terminal associated with said second user.
7. The system of claim 1 further comprising:
means for storing information regarding security and privacy preferences of said first user; and
means for enforcing said security and privacy preferences of said first user.
8. The system of claim 7 wherein said means for enforcing comprises means for said first user to input assent to an exchange of information.

9. The system of claim 7 wherein said security and privacy preferences comprise a list of prohibited matches.
10. The system of claim 7 wherein said security and privacy preferences comprise a list of conditions excluding a particular user from consideration by said means for determining.
11. The system of claim 10 wherein said conditions comprise at least one selected from the group of dates, days, times, and geographic locations.
12. The system of claim 10 wherein said conditions comprise at least two selected from the group of dates, days, times, and geographic locations.
13. The system of claim 7 wherein said security and privacy preferences comprise a list of conditions prohibiting said means for sending from sending an alert message to said portable communications terminal.
14. The system of claim 13 wherein said list of conditions comprises at least one selected from the group of dates, days, times, and geographic locations.
15. The system of claim 13 wherein said list of conditions comprises at least two selected from the group of dates, days, times, and geographic locations.
16. The system of claim 13 further comprising means for storing alert messages generated by said means for generating but not sent by said means for sending.
17. The system of claim 7 wherein said security and privacy preferences comprise first and second levels of security.
18. The system of claim 17 wherein said first level of security comprises conditions under which an alert message regarding a match between a first user and a second user may be sent to said second user without consent of said first user.
19. The system of claim 18 wherein said second level of security comprises conditions under which an alert message regarding a match between a first user and a second user may not be sent to said second user without consent of said first user.
20. The system of claim 18 in which the first level of notification message is a message indicating that an affinity match is nearby and providing limited information regarding the matching user.

21. The system of claim 19 in which the second level of notification message is a message providing sufficient information to permit the second user receiving the message to identify the first user.

22. The system of claim 1 wherein said location service maintains in a database a record of all affinity matches and associated communications.

23. The system of claim 22 wherein said database contains only summary information regarding each message.

24. The system of claim 22 wherein said database contains only complete copies of each message.

25. The system of claim 1 further comprising means for verifying the identity of a user.

26. The system of claim 25 wherein said means for verifying comprises means for checking that the user has subscribed to wireless service at a single, unchanging geographic address for a period of one year or longer.

27. The system of claim 25 wherein said means for verifying comprises examination of a governmentally-issued identification document.

28. The system of 27 wherein said governmentally-issued identification document is a driver's license.

29. The system of 27 wherein said governmentally-issued identification document is a passport.

30. The system of claim 25 wherein said means for verifying comprises biometric identification means.

31. A method for matching users by affinity and geographic location comprising the steps of:

entering into a memory at least one affinity preference of a first user having a portable communications terminal;

entering into a memory at least one affinity preference of a second user;

determining a location of said first user;

determining a location of said second user;

determining a match based upon a degree of affinity correlation between said first user and second user, wherein a minimum degree of affinity correlation constituting a match varies depending on the proximity of said first and second users;

generating an alert message when a match is determined by said determining a match step; and

sending said alert message to a portable communications terminal of at least one of said first and second users.

32. The method of claim 30 further comprising the step of determining an identity of at least one of said first and second users.